Children's Symposium Report

Proceedings and Results
of the Children's Symposium for Hamilton
convened on
January 31,2001

written by:

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A planning committee developed the Children's Symposium in Hamilton over several months in the summer and autumn of 2000. This committee worked to define a program that would inform the community about child development research and issues. The Symposium attempted to bring together community members from various backgrounds to explore shared and discuss ways of making Hamilton a better place for children. The vision and work of the planning committee made this event possible.

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The Children's Symposium Planning Committee Members and Organizations dedicated this effort to the memory of Dr. Paul Steinhauer.

Children's Symposium Report

Proceedings and Results
of the Children's Symposium for Hamilton

Executive Summary

On January 31, 2001 we held a Children's Symposium event at Carmen's Banquet Center in Hamilton. More than 475 people representing a wide range of professionals participated in the event.

They came to:

- to learn more about child development and community supports
- to define a long term community vision for children and youth
- to build on positive initiatives already in place
- to increase participation and involvement and inspire people to take part in making Hamilton a better place for children

This report provides a review of the program as well as a record of the results of small group discussions which took place during the afternoon portion of the program.

Program Highlights

Andrea Horwath, Hamilton City Councillor opened the program by noting local government support for action to address the healthy development needs of children in our community.
Fraser Mustard, co-chair of the Early Years Study and director of the Founders' Network, provided the keynote speech. His presentation described evidence drawn from recent research about the process of brain development and other factors important to healthy development of children. He stressed the importance to children of their early experiences, positive interactions and the value of parents and other primary caregivers involvement in the development of children to improve outcomes for children's behaviour, learning and health in later life.

Clara Will of the North York Children's Alliance provided the Symposium with a presentation detailing the work being done to develop a comprehensive strategy for Children's Services in North York.

Scott Haldane of the YMCA Hamilton, Burlington moderated a panel of community leaders who addressed key issues for promoting healthy development of children. Each panelist had a unique perspective on the subject. Panelists included:

- Diane Bascombe of the Executive Director of the Center for Voluntary Research and Development,
- Carolyn Milne, Executive Director of the Hamilton Community Foundation,
- Terry Cooke, Chief of Operations for Fluke Transport and Fox 40 and
- Dr. Dan Offord of the Canadian Center for Studies of Children at Risk.

Small Group Discussion Summary

In the afternoon, Symposium participants participated in discussion groups on different aspects of a municipal strategy for children in Hamilton. The following summaries report important issues or messages emerging from the discussion. These are elaborated on to a greater extent in the full report.

1. Early years initiatives (0-6 years)

   Many discussion groups formed around the early years as their preferred frame of reference. They identified funding as a concern. They felt many programs and services were underfunded. They noted this is particularly true of programs providing services for high risk and special needs children. Human resources, including volunteers require improved strategies for recruitment, retention and mentoring or support. Creating a comprehensive plan for building interest and awareness in early years research findings would be worthwhile.

   Groups recommended improving information management about community programs and services and improve sharing of this information. Participants also recommended building inventories of information on programs, community networks and granting bodies to support appropriate community responses. This would also to increase participation or engagement of the private sector in nurturing and supporting children.

   Groups identified ways in which the private sector could play a larger role in this process. Knowledge transfer, training and education are a role for that sector to play. We need to build awareness of the need for a broad community strategy to address children's health and well being.
   It is important to make information and programs more accessible. Strategies for this include making programs portable, improving transportation services, increasing electronic access and using a client-centered approach to developing or modifying services.

   Hamilton has a very diverse population. More is needed to respond to cultural diversity in the community and create culturally welcoming initiatives.

   Poverty is limiting access to the necessities of life for children. At the same time services, supports and information need to be universally available and accessible. It is important to integrate children and families in ways that make people comfortable in participating together.

   Partnerships and collaboration were identified as important features of the work being done to respond to the development needs of children. This will facilitate the effective provision of a continuum of supports and encourage across health, social service, education, recreation and private sectors.

   Participants noted that quality programs are important and so it is important to continue to invest in training, support, mentoring and make use of best practices knowledge. Changes will occur when the broad community understands and gains a sense of ownership of this issue. A 'community map' would be a useful tool in developing strategies for larger long-term issues, our current condition and the actions required to improve healthy outcomes for children. These efforts will also need to be evaluated to inform the community about any impacts we are having as a result of early years projects and initiatives.

2. **School age years initiatives (6-12 years)**
   Groups dealing with this theme suggested increasing communication and collaboration among services, improving access to information about resources, increasing involvement of volunteers and more education for the broad community on healthy development issues.
   Community involvement in school age initiatives is considered essential. This should include people at the neighbourhood level, parents and youth in decision-making. Funding to support initiatives is also important. Participants felt that funds are currently restricting efforts.

   They recommended that the Charter of Rights for Children be used as a reference for programs and that children's rights be linked to quality of life issues such as adequate housing.

3. **Youth supporting initiatives (12-18 years)**
   Group discussions advised actions to improve information about services and better coordinate programs. They suggested the development of increased support for a local charter and a widely supported strategy for action. Initiatives that youth can lead and 'own' should be developed. Better education and action to address child abuse is needed. As a community we should examine barriers to healthy development efforts and provide more education opportunities, particularly around parenting skills.

4. **Policy development**
   Groups recommended that local policies include all children, there is a need to reach out to business and the private sector, ensure that all cultural groups can use these services and that we inventory current neighbourhood development initiatives. This work should occur in the context of an educational process for the community to improve understanding of child development needs.

5. **Business role in supporting children and youth**
   The suggestions made by this group included making renewed efforts to improve information sharing and educating people about the needs of children. They advised action to engage large and small corporations as participants and strengthen their contribution to a community process. We should consider forming a community based committee with business participation to direct and coordinate action and do more outreach in the community to form partnerships.

6. **Health**
   The group discussing health perspectives supported the need for sharing information about those community initiatives already taking place locally. Partnerships were noted as important to build and strengthen. Participants suggested that work continue to develop resources and increase funding and policy support for children's programs. Health promotion and prevention programs should be undertaken which inform and involve more groups and ongoing dialogue with politicians and governments is recommended.

7. **Research**
   The group discussing research issues noted that research and evaluation can provide useful information to sustain interest in changing communities to address healthy development needs of children. This work is expensive and can take a long time to complete, wherever possible exiting databases should be used to analyse our experience in supporting and nurturing children. Evaluation should be used to set targets for community success on healthy child development

and then used in designing new strategies to meet targets. More information and interaction between researchers and practitioners would improve understanding and use of information.

8. **Community based initiatives**
   These groups suggested that there be a community advisory committee responsible for involving the community and setting some community direction or priorities, that this process should include children, build on community strengths and assets and facilitate communication among various stakeholders in the community.

Discussion Themes

Several themes emerge when the discussion record of groups is analysed. These themes are identified as a result of different groups independently arriving at similar statements or recommendations independent of each other's process. This recurrence of an idea or recommendation indicates that it may be a priority or at least an idea that is more broadly supported than some others. In view of this, these are ideas which should be considered first for action as a follow up to the Symposium.

There were eight recurring themes that will be identified here in order of apparent importance, beginning with the one that was most often identified followed by those noted less frequently.

The strongest recurring message was participants felt we should be improving the information available to the community on programs and services that are of benefit to children. In many cases participants noted that by improving information and its availability or accessibility we could use existing resources to their full potential. This would increase the efficiency of the system and lead to gains in the short term.

Another theme often noted was that as a community we must continue to invest in building partnerships and working collaboratively to address children's needs in the community. As a component of this, people often suggested that we invest as a community in more training and education on best practices and new research being done to ensure we are well informed as we develop strategies and services for the community.

Participants emphasized, in a related theme, the need for community mapping activity which would better identify needs, trends, characteristics and services in the community. This mapping would strengthen the information base needed to support effective community response. This also suggests the value of continuing to invest in research in our community to better understand child development issues. Support for research was well noted as an important activity in the community strategic response to children's issues. The research should extend to evaluation of strategies to ensure we are continually getting feedback as a community on the impact or benefit of our efforts to improve conditions.

Several discussion groups noted that programs and services are underfunded. This is a matter of growing concern and needs to be addressed. A number of groups concluded that increased funding for families and services is clearly needed as part of the solution to improving outcomes for children.

Our community needs to increase community participation in this process. Still too few people are aware of the issues. More community involvement, and broader community involvement is needed. That is, groups were recommending that other sectors of the community become involved in the process of exploring and improving conditions for children. There is a place for greater private sector involvement and greater involvement of youth in this process to name a few.

Hamilton also needs a strategy that reflects and responds to the cultural diversity in this community. This is particularly important in Hamilton as we have a growing and increasingly diverse population. Community involvement strategies need to reflect this and strategies for service development, research and investment need to reflect this characteristic of the community.

A number of discussion groups noted that we need to continue to build community awareness generally about children's issues and conditions. This awareness in many ways is seen as essential to building strength and momentum to the whole process of creating a widely understood and well supported community strategy to improve outcomes for children in Hamilton.

Evaluation Results

Each participant received a registration kit that included a one-page evaluation form inviting comment and feedback on the day's program. There were 197 evaluation forms returned providing a 41% response rate.

Participants reported a high degree of satisfaction with most aspects of the Symposium. Advance materials were seen as effective preparation. The registration kits were valued as useful information for the program. Speakers and panelists were considered informative and stimulating although the speaker's roster may have provided for more presentations than optimally required. Some exchange between audience and presenters would have improved the program.

Workshop discussions were considered useful although in many cases too short to discuss fully issues that participants want to talk about. There is a clear interest in having this event followed up with action and another Symposium or community workshop in one year's time.

Next Steps

A detailed report is available through the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton or it's website at www.sprc.hamilton.on.ca to provide a readily available reference to the Symposium proceedings and detailed information about the program presentations and group discussions.

The results of the Symposium will become a reference document for the City of Hamilton to encourage continued support from the Municipal Government on action to create a community plan or comprehensive strategy to meet the needs of children in Hamilton.

Committee members and volunteers also anticipate working towards the preparation of an annual update report of progress on the issues and recommendations noted by participants in this Symposium. Another symposium in 2003 is also recommended.

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INTRODUCTION

The Symposium event was held on January 31, 2001 at Carmen's Banquet Center in Hamilton. More than 475 people participated in the event. This report provides a review of the program as well as a record of the key results of small group discussions that took place during the afternoon portion of the program.

The original purpose of a symposium was to bring together a multi-disciplinary group of community interests to review our current strategies, resources and community services being directed to children's needs in the municipality. The Symposium was designed to inform and educate participants about the identified high priority needs for children, and begin to formulate a comprehensive strategy for allocating or reallocating community resources to better meet children's needs. A symposium serves as a catalyst to strengthening partnerships between governments, service deliverers, researchers, local businesses, planning bodies and citizens in the process of working together as a community to meet needs.

The actions taken to plan and present the event began with the establishment of a planning committee to identify resource partners, assemble information and expertise needed for the Symposium program, develop program outline and follow-up on Symposium activity. A Planning committee was formed in April 2000 and then a large consultation meeting held in June 2000 to define the event. Committee meetings held monthly to shape program and develop strategies for engaging community participation. The Committee set out to collect available information on selected recent research, local programs, resources, agencies, services, community coalitions and networks that are currently active in addressing children's needs in the Region. A variety of materials were assembled and distributed to participants in the Symposium. These included copies of the Early Years Report, recommendations from Connections for Kids, a summary of the existing draft of the Municipal Strategy for Children in Hamilton and a set of selected references of articles and publications for further study.

Participants were also provided with a participant list of individuals participating in the event and the organizations they may have represented to provide an indication of the strength of sectoral representation in the process as well as the range of organizations serving the community addressing children's' healthy development needs.

Purpose of Symposium

The goals for the Symposium were:

- to learn more about child development and community supports
- to define a long term community vision for children and youth
- to build on positive initiatives already in place
- to increase participation and involvement and inspire people to take part in making Hamilton a better place for children

Background

Several background documents were circulated to participants in the Symposium to broaden understanding of important work done in the community to date. These documents included the Children's Charter (see Appendix I), the Municipal Strategy for Hamilton, the Connections for Kids Report Recommendations (see Appendix II) and a full copy of the Early Years Study: Final Report (April 1999) provided by the Ontario Children's Secretariat.

These documents were also used as reference material for conference participants in their small group discussions. These documents were provided on the recommendation of the Planning Committee in order to assist participants in building on this work and developing further some of the actions recommended.

Program Highlights

Andrea Horwath, Councillor, City of Hamilton

Andrea noted she was overwhelmed by the community response to this symposium. She reminded conference participants that children are this community's most precious resource and that we should make good use of the Children's Charter for this community to develop the best supports and opportunities for children of Hamilton.

Councillor Horwath noted that Toronto has a child advocate to direct attention to important issues for children and that Hamilton might also benefit from having a designated child advocate. She encouraged all members of the community to become part of a community based process to support children and work together as partners with the municipality to create and support initiatives that benefit children.

Doctor Fraser Mustard, President of the Founders Network

Dr. Mustard delivered the keynote address to the Symposium. The following summary offers a few highlights from that presentation.

It is important for people in the community to have a shared framework of understanding and good information about supporting the healthy development of all children as a basis for community process. This understanding should lead to a clear strategy to invest in children. This will ultimately lead to improvement in the quality of life for all members of the country. The Government of Ontario is committed to early childhood development and demonstrated this through its support of the Early Years Study.

The Founders Network website was identified as a source of information on healthy development of children and for more information on the presentation.

Determinants of health were identified as particularly important in understanding human development. Dr. Mustard noted that simply stated, what happens to you as a child affects your brain. Pathways to learning and pathways to behavior are established very early in life.

Population health seems to be based partly conditions of public health and conditions nourishment nutrition. Social partitioning of health and human development is not a good idea. People in all social classes are affected, if you just tackle the issue of poverty you alienate the middle class, and this makes it hard to get the public support needed for helpful policies.

Research of mortality by social class in Britain presented gradients which showed that people in high demand jobs with low control had poor health outcomes, while those with low demand and high control in the workplace had better health outcomes. Early life sets the risk levels for many health problems that will be experienced later in life. The brain develops pathways to learning, behavior, and health early in life.

There is a correlation between literacy and education levels and health in life later on. Social class at birth has a bearing on health outcomes. The handling of children through other social structures and social services such as day care centers for example, or other social instruments create a biological effect on children.

Studies on animals show that when young are well nurtured they do not show evidence of long term cognitive disability. We need to combine genetic and nurturing benefits together Some evidence in research shows that children involved in programs in their early years have better outcomes, for example fewer teen pregnancies fewer problems with the law than those not involved in programs. Programs for early childhood development need to be available to all parents. The single biggest problem we have in government is poor understanding of the need to invest resources in the early years.

The National Longitudinal study of children and youth is enormously important. Children of Ontario are behind the rest of the country in terms of the goal for performance in the early years. Citizens of Ontario need to push the preschool age and agenda across all social classes to improve literacy of outcomes. Cuba invested in mothers and children and his results social cultural gradients mathematics performance are good. Skill development for children in kindergarten affects performance in mathematical achievement by grade eight.

Conclusion of the report on early childhood development is that we need more:

- parenting centers
- parenting support and education
- play based learning
- toy and resource libraries
- prenatal and post natal supports
- nutrition programs & information and referral services

Government is making supports available but it depends on communities and how they organize themselves to take advantage of the resources that will make a big difference. Federal government's and provincial governments have responded now it's up to communities to make it work and for able local politicians to lend their support.

Clara Will, Executive Director, North York Adventure Place

Clara has worked for a long time to interest people in early years development. She has worked to make North York a place for all children to have the best chance in life. Clara saw this Symposium is an important step in making that happen.

She described the process of how North York got organized for community action. The one key point is that the community requires a clearly defined vision. As a community you have to believe in the vision, have clearly defined goals, and not try to please all people or all advisors.

She recommended that in Hamilton we build on what we already know and what we are learning, then create a comprehensive, integrated plan in the community to ensure that every child is ready to learn. When children reach school age, if well prepared, they are best able to learn. The challenge is to ensure the support has been given to ensure children are cognitively, socially, emotionally and physically able to learn.

North York developed an organizational structure to develop a community strategy and implement strategy in an interconnected mutually supportive way. It is important to know what the state of the child is in the community. They applied for funding to Readiness to Learn project to measure conditions at entry to school, funding from HRDC. The early years action group wanted to know how children are doing at entrance to child welfare, school, entrance to health and social systems. Healthy Babies Healthy Children came to North York and the early years network was there connect it in the community.

There is a shortage of resources to keep measuring how children are doing and this is needed to see if community action is making a difference. It is also important to know what the government is doing, what the system is doing, what resources are there and what human resources or services are there. North York now has a lot of data and some of it is connected to the national longitudinal study.

Community motivation is important and must reflect what action makes sense. Geographic communities are defined within larger communities. These are needed for community mobilization. We cannot mobilize entire region at one time. Selecting a target helps to identify key focus for a community. She suggested Hamilton focus on communities and neighbourhoods and not entire cities.

North York selected an area and focussed on characteristics and mobilization strategies. They used a ground up model, with supportive infrastructure, child center and friendly caring health line to provide access to information through social and economic policies that support families.

They are now at a crucial time, building on local community strengths, holding meetings with committees from each area within the communities to share information about how children are doing. The next step is to compare information, the initiate of community strategies to coordinate existing strategies and programs for children in families, identify gaps in supports then link the various communities and strategies for ongoing support to build a

system. That way the process builds up from the community and supports area mobilization. Each community has committee members with important responsibility for public programs and services on these committees.

Supports are available, accessible and affordable and they are available where they are needed. Supports are linked across communities and located at only one site. They need a virtual approach because communities are not the same, They need commitment to ensure that supports are available where needed.

North York works on the principle that they must strive for a universal approach for all children inclusive of the most vulnerable and inclusive of those with special needs. We simply cannot continue to focus our resources on only the specific targeted groups. We need to provide services and supports to all children. Families are not static, they move around, if they're not in targeted groups today they may be tomorrow, circumstances change, needs change, they move in and out of categories. So, we must plan for all children or we will never achieve the kind of caring community we want.

North York plans to develop a guide which is common to all children and for communities to consider needs for all children at different stages in their lives. Clara noted that we know the primary needs of children and what conditions need to be met to provide the required core conditions for children in each community. She advised we look in each community and see what is needed in each community. She suggested we have a social action component so that when communities raise issues the work goes on to make change.

We all need more data to support our case. In North York, they have been developing the plan without funding, except for research. Local organizations have been making important contributions and this is important to leading the process, but more resources are needed. The private sector must share this responsibility. A new book by Caplan:" Balancing the Scorecard" was recommended reading for a new way of funding non-profits, incubating the new stars of the social service system and bringing to charities the dynamic growth of the information age. We need to be investing in social services rather than donating to charities as resources to communities are disappearing.

Government must not abandon its responsibility. It must provide the core resources for children's needs, and invest in children, families and communities. We don't see the gap between the advantaged and the disadvantaged narrowing in communities. The casualty class is not shrinking.

In 1989 the UN convention on Rights of the Child, signed by Canada, declared the children have the first call on a nations resources in bad times as well as in good. It takes a collective commitment to care for our children. No one can do it alone. We have to make sure one sector isn't expected to take responsibility more than another. Childcare has to be available when and where it is needed.

Clara offered that North York would be glad to help Hamilton where needed. She closed with a quote from Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has."

Panel Session

Scott Haldane, YMCA, Moderator

Scott introduced the panel session with a few remarks that noted that he was impressed with the level of collaboration, the spirit of community and willingness to work together in Hamilton. One example of this he noted is the youth serving agencies network (YSAN) which acts as broker to provide subsidized cultural and recreational services for children whose families are on social assistance in Hamilton. It has been in operation since 1999 and is modeled on the results of two studies carried out by the System Linked Research Unit at McMaster University led by Dr. Gina Browne in Hamilton. Studies done by that research unit have demonstrated that providing children whose families are on social assistance with recreation services has doubled the exit rate from social assistance from 10% to 20%. In addition the mental health of parents has improved as well as the academic, social and vocational competence of children with social disorders. The participation in programs also resulted in improved overall lifestyle of parents and their children.

Diane Bascombe, Executive Director, Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development

Diane reinforced the need for shared understanding of the value of providing the right environment for children to prosper. As a community we need to care and nurture children. There is a need for a process to develop a shared vision for a community. She suggested we then have to believe in it and move toward it as a community.

She advised that support for available affordable and accessible services emphasize the need for communities to work together. A critical mass of individuals and organizations is essential to moving local strategies forward. Political will is needed. We must keep children's needs high on the agenda. A Children's Charter is an important tool in this process. Valuing our children for who they are today is important.

We have to have integrated social and economic strategies and support research to inform policy makers. As community members we must be able to count on services, funding and policy frameworks which support the healthy development of children.

Finding quality childcare is still a problem. The recent federal throne speech noted 2.2 billion dollars will be spent over the next five years for early childhood development. This is an important beginning. Federal commitment to a national children's agenda is important, but still have a long way to go.

The voluntary sector has an important role to play in acting as the glue for our community and in providing an infrastructure to ensure families and children can be well taken care of. It will always be our challenge to take experience and convert that into good policy. It is a

travesty that there are still one in five children living in poverty in this country. We are the wealthiest country in the world and believe we can ensure that every child can develop to its full potential.

Carolyn Milne, President and Chief Executive Officer, Hamilton Community Foundation

The Hamilton Community Foundation is a member of one of the fastest-growing and most dynamic networks dedicated to building and strengthening communities. In Canada, there are approximately 109 Community Foundations that hold combined assets of about $1.4 billion. Last year, they made grants of over $60 million to support priorities across the country.

The Hamilton Community Foundation is one of the fastest-growing foundations in Canada. In just five years, they have grown from $13.8 million to $81 million in assets. In that same time frame, they have gone from distributing $457,000 in grants to a projected $4 million this year. They work with citizens from all walks of life who simply want to give back to a community that they call home, a community that they will tell you has been good to them. These combined gifts are invested in a permanent endowment that, with a prudent investment strategy, will grow and be there for the community forever.

The grantmaking of the Community Foundation is accomplished from the income generated annually and it supports charities from all the sectors of the community. The Board of Directors has made the whole area of children and youth a top priority. In the past two years, they have distributed over $2 million to support child and youth initiatives. Their grantmaking ranges from support of research, training and coalition building, to supporting the transition process from one develop-mental stage to the next, such as pre-natal support to adolescent support into adulthood.

Their priorities have been focused on school nourishment programs, literacy strategies, stay-in-school programs, parenting skills, mentoring programs, youth violence and aggression management. With better strategic collaboration amongst funders and charities themselves, we have a much better chance to perhaps begin to tackle some of the root causes that result in an unbalanced playing field for kids.

Our work together is focused on giving kids a healthy start in life, strengthening relationships with adults – whether that be parents, mentors or caring adults – providing an opportunity to develop skills to boost self-esteem and develop marketable skills, providing a safe environment in our schools, homes and on our streets.

All were encouraged to examine how you can immediately call upon the expertise of our youth in your day-to-day operations and in the planning of events like this one today. At the Foundation it will be unlikely that grants will be made that affect children and youth without their meaningful consultation.

Some philanthropic trends and facts show that we live in a very generous community. In a 1996 survey on giving and volunteering, it was found that 88% of people living in the Hamilton area made financial donations to charitable and non-profit organizations, compared to 80% as a provincial average and 78% as a national average. Our community's charitable donations totalled over $136.5 million in that year. In fact, our average donation was $295, while the provincial average was $279 and the national average was $239.

These facts and figures speak volumes about the love for community and philanthropic concern that local citizens have about their community. Could it be that these qualities are waiting to be galvanized around our community's most precious resource - our children?

In Canada, there are approximately 7 million children (24% of the population) under the age of 18; in our own community, 26% of the population, or 122,700, are 19 years of age and younger. Richard Schubert, Chairman of the Peter Drucker Foundation, encourages us to move quickly, "before the promise of childhood is poisoned by exploitation and neglect." He advises us that many, as we know, are still open to the influence of positive role models, education, skills training and the counsel of adults who care.

The voluntary sector has a very important role to play in this new century. There is a need to create space for ongoing, respectful dialogue. By bringing all of the sectors together - public, private and the voluntary sector -- with representation cutting across gender, race, age and religion, we have a chance to find common ground.

In this new century, we need to find new ways of talking, making decisions and moving to action. The experts tell us that "the function of deciding together is critical for communities now and in the future. Suzanne Morse, from the Pew Partnership for Civic Change, stresses that "critical to the actions of the next generation is a commitment to all children and all people". She illustrates this point by telling us of the greeting that is used by Masai warriors in Africa: "How are the children?" The traditional response is, "All the children are well."

Today, by coming together, Carloyn hoped that we have taken the first step towards creating a phrase that could become a reality for our community of the future: "How are the children?" "All the children are well."

Dr. Dan Offord, Director of the Canadian Centre for Studies of Children at Risk

Dan noted that Canadians agree on something: that having healthy children is important. To see this happens in Canada, three actions should be taken: clinical work should be done with sensitivity and up to date models, we need good programs particularly on the prevention side and improve the availability of quality child care to all children.

Everyone is concerned about the casualty class of kids. Everyone understands it isn't fair but it is more than that. It is not just those kids, but its is going to be those children and

ours, our grandkids and our neighbours and their children who will be affected. We need one universal set of programs to reduce the casualty class of kids.

There are four ways we can do this. First, in a civic community all kids have what poor kids need and that is much more contact with non-poor kids. Second, children in a civic community deserve full participation. In a civic community people take responsibility for more than their own kids. Third, we need a family friendly workplace that will respond to and support families and children. Fourth, we need universal programs to serve and support all children. They 'till the soil' for any targeted program which you want to develop social skills. They put kids together.

Clinical programs are expensive and have to be well done. Universal programs for rich and poor have similar outcomes for children or benefit them equally. It is important to have a model for good services. Programs should target the population of children who don't often come out. The children who are winners come out, so you need specific strategies to get high-risk kids out.

Programs need independent observation to make sure they are working. We need to continue to study programs that work best. We need to continue to talk with the community to see what programs they would like to see what results they would like. Social recording should be done to make this work meaningful, consult with the community, make results readable and make information useable.

What is it like growing up in Canada? It's a race, and we don't mind the race as long as it is fair. Canada is the best place in the world according to a UN study, but not for all kids. What the field needs is informed action, people who want to make the race fair and to cut down on the country producing poor kids.

Terry Cooke, Chief Executive Officer, Fluke Transport and Vice President, Fox 40

Terry noted he was inspired by the turnout. He offered that Ron Foxcroft, founder of Fox 40 has made commitments to sport and community. His efforts represent a model of commitment for successful businesses to give back to the community. Ron Chaired the Week of the Child in this community and believes in community and children. They make donations to support activities but also commit time energy and support in the form of sponsorships to organizations and agencies locally.

They support social capital efforts with agencies that are doing good work and attracting people in a voluntary capacity into voluntary, faith based and neighbourhood associations who put sweat equity into the deal in a way that will really affect their community. They also like to leverage their dollars. They support initiatives and efforts that combine with governments, service clubs and voluntary agencies. That makes good sense because it takes care of shareholders, improves return on equity, helps employees and the community the community they live in.

Businesses choose to locate in some communities and not others based on the magnets - competitive tax base, access to markets, good transportation, educated workforce and ability for research and technology. What often gets overlooked is the glue, quality of life. Is it a safe community? The balance of nature, clean environment, health care, early childhood education, nurturing the development of children in a way that recent studies suggest are also important considerations for business. This information must help inform the private sector about their decisions, about charitable and philanthropic giving and about how to direct voluntary giving and encourage sweat equity to make a difference. In Hamilton we have to bring the business community into the circle help them understand how we can leverage the dollars available. They look forward at Fox 40 to being a part of this process.

Group Discussions

The afternoon program of the Symposium provided the opportunity for participants to form small discussion groups which were structured to examine issues related to eight subject areas. Those subject areas were identified as: Early Years Initiatives, School Age Initiatives, Youth supporting initiatives, Policy Development, Business Role in supporting children and youth, Health, Research and Community based initiatives. Each discussion group had a facilitator and a recorder to keep notes on the discussion. Some subjects had more than one small group discussing that subject.

Notes from small groups were then collected and summarized. Where there was more than one small group dealing with a subject area, the notes have been assimilated into one summary of the issues noted. The following section provides a review of the issues, ideas and recommendations for action recorded by participants in all small groups at the Symposium.

Discussion Group Summaries

Early Years Initiatives

Key Messages:

- Funding
- Human Resources
- Information Management
- Knowledge Transfer/Training/Education
- Diversity
- Accessibility
- Impact of Poverty/Universality
- Informed passion/Mentoring
- Collaboration/Partnerships
- Standards/Accreditation
- Role of the Community
- Evaluation

Government Funding for programs and services currently in operation were viewed as "under-funded". There are for example a limited number of subsidized spaces in licensed child care, a need for professional development funding, parent education, and enhanced programming opportunities for children, adequate supplies such as developmentally appropriate toys, equipment and more. There is a particularly great need for programs providing services for high risk and special needs children.

Private sector commitment to long term funding is viewed as essential. Securing the interest and commitment of the private sector will be a challenge that needs to be addressed. Workshop participants asked about the sustainability of programs and services once projects are funded. What will the impact of the early years initiatives be without long-term commitment for sustained funding?

To adequately staff child care services we will require improved strategies for recruitment and retention of staff in early education programs. We need to improve professional development opportunities. There is a recognized need for professional development that focuses on cultural diversity and culturally welcoming initiatives.

Mentoring is an important strategy and needs to be used to provide support to staff and students of early childhood education and to support professionalism and passion for the value of early learning.

Targeted training workshops should be a component of our system of services. In this community we need to develop a training plan to address the impacts and long-term outcomes of early learning. This needs to be provided to the public at large, private sector, health, education, recreation, and social services sectors.

Comprehensive resource plans are needed to address sustainability, promote public awareness of the early years findings, spark interest/commitment of potential donors in the public and non-profit sectors, and to generate proposal submissions.

Information management must also improve. Information databases should identify the information currently available in the community with respect to programs and services for children and families that spans sectors. We need to know what data banks currently exist and who has access to the information. It is important to remove language, cultural sector barriers, and to develop a community information web to improve access to and use of available information.

As a community we need to improve information sharing and make it accessible and understandable to diverse users in health, social services, education, recreation, private sector, parents, neighbourhoods. The quality of information must be assessed to determine if it is current, comprehensive and in a user-friendly form. An inventory of information on funding, programs services, role and mandate of agencies, proposals, grants, business plans, community networks and so on would be useful data as well. This database is currently beyond the Red Book parameters for providing information on the community.

Management of electronic data warrants greater investment. We should maintain and update information, develop community maps and keep this information current. Partnerships and links with existing services need to be explored.

Knowledge transfer, training and education are important issues to address. This community would benefit from a public awareness campaign to ensure those parents, caregivers, educators receive and understand the impact of early years findings and research outcomes. We should know how to translate that information into accessible programs and services that are affordable.

A communication plan needs to be developed to provide information to engage the community and to enable the community to participate in early years initiatives. We need additional skill and capacity to generate grant and proposals, conduct fundraising, and build private sector commitment and involvement.

Engagement of the private sector should grow. Participants in discussions wondered how we could better involve the private sector. What role can the private sector play in addition to providing funding? How can the positive impact of parent friendly work environments be positioned and presented to the private sector? How can parent friendly work environments be nurtured and supported?

Access to programs, services and information are all features of an early years system of supports which need strengthening. There are too many examples of barriers to accessing current information, programs and services in the community. Several suggestions for removing barriers were offered. For example, make programs portable. Rural and downtown areas are not always easily accessible to families and existing programs cannot be accessed. There are existing buildings, church halls and other community and public buildings in neighbourhoods that can be utilized to house programs, toys and equipment for parents to borrow.

Transportation is another barrier to address. In addition to making dollars available for additional subsidized licensed child-care spaces, access to programs could be greatly improved with transportation.

Electronic access is another form of barrier. For a variety of reasons, financial, transportation, language and education, not all families can use or have access to computers and the vast amount of information available on the Internet. We need to discover how we make information available so that there is greater access to user-friendly information. Early years programs and projects need to be developed with input from the community to ensure that they are client-driven and client-centred.

Hamilton has a very diverse population in terms of social, educational, economic, linguistic, and cultural characteristics. Early years projects and initiatives need to be mindful of the diverse nature of the community so that outcomes or recommendations are inclusive. Early years projects and programs need to be targeted to children at the right time. We also

need appropriate developmental milestones in place for the home, neighbourhood, school, and church that support development.

Children require the "necessities of life" such as adequate nutrition, shelter and other basic so that they are really ready to learn, receive information and benefit from early learning intervention. Kids from all economic groups need to mix together to equalize families. Service providers need to find ways to make all families feel comfortable. Families need not be marginalized or "targeted". All families need to be involved. Both the needs of "high risk" or "grey area" children should be included in services to meet the developmental needs of children. The promotion of "universality" with respect to program affordability, accessibility for all families was frequently mentioned as a desirable feature of the system.

There is a need to keep people informed about the early years project and it's long-term impact on human growth and development. Information sharing will spark a passionate response from the broader community. Mentoring, training, and buddy system initiatives between the business sector and non-profit sector are important to develop. Present opportunities for supporting families and for making the workplace child and parent friendly need to be encouraged and replicated.

Collaboration, partnerships and clarity regarding roles and relationships between all levels of government needs development. Across agencies, it is important to break down the barriers to communication, identify gaps in service and to work together to close gaps.

New and creative partnerships need to be developed across the health, social service, education, and recreation sectors and particularly with the private sector. Existing links need to be strengthened.

Parents need to know what services are out there, how to access them and how they connect. For example a licensed childcare, special needs services and public education services should all be easier to find out about and access. A "continuum" of supports needs to be in place.

Physicians need to be invited to participate and connect to early year's initiatives and their development. Ways of including the primary care system and persons such as nurse practitioners, health care centres, therapists and others needs to be identified. We should also build connections and links with the Aboriginal Health Board and the native community. These connections need to be developed and strengthened particularly in Hamilton. We need to keep the "sectors connected" generally speaking. We should organize an information system (database) and co-ordinate child and youth programs and activities.

All three levels of government need to be involved. There is a need to link/align government initiatives to community needs. With respect to Early Years Study findings and outcomes we need to determine what the role of each level of government will be and what support will be offered.

Standards and accreditation need to be better used to generate community support for the value of Early Childhood Education. Our community needs more opportunities for on-the-job training, post graduation support and increased wages to retain quality educators. We require funding for lab schools, to demonstrate best practices and to mentor students.

The profession of Early Childhood Educators needs to be recognized by legislation. Accreditation would raise profile of Early Childhood Educators and increase the public perception and awareness of the value of early learning.

Parents also need to have access to information quality programs. Still, we should better define how can quality is measured and what standards exist or should exist for early childhood programs. We have lots of awareness on the part of parents and professionals but there is a lack of funding that supports best early learning practices.

The role of the community warrants development. Greater empowerment of the community and developing a sense of community ownership are two results worth pursuing. Overall we need to create an inclusiveness environment with fewer boundaries around programs, service and agencies. We should also create opportunities for the community to give suggestions and express their ideas about initiatives and early year's projects. We need to develop a sense of the big picture and take action to develop "community map"

Evaluation and impacts of new programs and projects emerging from early years projects and initiatives need to be assessed. It is important to understand the value and impact of the initiatives and projects approved for early years funding. How will early years programs be evaluated is another question which deserves attention.

Our community should emphasize and position the early years development information as a wellness model worth broad community support. Media support will be important to launch any new public awareness campaign and to spark interest and commitment of the private sector. Sustainability and a matching funds requirement will be challenging responsibilities. Through it all, we need to make early years research and language understandable. Key players need to move and advance this initiative and "take action".

School Age Initiatives

Key Messages:

- Improve communication about programs and services.
- Identify the children early.
- Use facilities in a collaborative way.
- Input of the whole community is essential.
- Programs need to be universal / accessible to all
- Use Charter of Rights across programs.

As a community of service providers we need to improve communication about programs and services. It seems that many people do not know what services exist. Information about the range of services available needs to be shared. There is a need to improve the network

of links among services. Accessibility to information is important and should be widespread in the community and available to all. For example libraries, doctors offices, recreation centres and other services should all be access points to information about services.

Dissemination of various types of information is important. Reports and research should be at the fingertips of policy makers. When people are making decisions about children good information should be in front of them. A variety of communications tools need to be used including web sites, quarterly newsletters and community flyers to improve access to information.

Early intervention and prevention programs should identify children early in order to be more effective. Services need to improve collaboration and coordination efforts. As a community we should use facilities in a collaborative way. To do this, programs should partner with one another. We need to identify gaps in services with emphasis on early childhood education and childcare in schools. Other system improvements to pursue include new cross ministry initiatives and increased availability of social services in schools.

Universality is an important feature of a community system of services and supports to develop for children in the community. All programs need to address this issue. Programs should also develop strategies to include special needs populations, increase accessibility for culturally diverse populations and include children growing up in poverty.

Community involvement in programs and services is important to develop. The input of the whole community is essential to making programs suited to the needs of the community as well as accessible, supported and well used. We need to recognize the importance of the neighbourhood as a measure of the small community within the larger. We must also include youth in decision making and develop youth advocacy councils. This process needs to be inclusive. It should encourage parent involvement and treat parents as partners.

Family friendly practices should be developed specifically relating to business and the working life that many parents experience. Resources are important to most services. The importance of continuous funding cannot be underestimated as a key characteristic of stability of supports for children in the community over the long term.

The impression among workshop participants is that there are fewer dollars to support services. It is essential to acknowledge that services require additional and substantial funding without needless strings or unreasonable restrictions. Service providers are not professional fundraisers and to ensure adequate support services need to be publicly funded. As a community we need to better share or pool resources to get the best value out of resources available.

A general inventory of services would be useful to understanding the variety and location of services available. A community-mapping project would be a useful support to all identified services and issues.

A variety of issues were identified with respect to accessibility. There is a need for human contact or "a face" from the services being provided. There should be a single point of access to services and supports. Increased availability of programs specifically recreation and arts would be of benefit. User fees as an additional cost of recreation programs would reduce accessibility rather than improve it. Education of the public, community and professionals is essential. People need to know about all programs and services available in the community.

Groups discussing school age initiatives made several recommendations. They recommended that the Children's Charter of Rights guide all services in the design and delivery of programs. Children and youth need to have an awareness and understanding of rights and responsibilities that hopefully will lead to youth empowerment and greater self-esteem. Children's rights need to be linked to quality of life issues including for example housing.

Volunteers were seen as important and could be used more broadly. Evaluations of programs and quality control are also important considerations for every program. Advocacy and better understanding of the links to how and why we provide youth programs, funding issues and support for specific groups all could be strengthened. Finally, there is a need to engage the media in a positive way and to ensure stronger media advertising and communication support.

Workshop: Youth Supporting Initiatives

Key messages:

- Improve information about services and coordination of activities.
- Develop increased support for a local charter and strategy for action
- Develop initiatives that youth can lead and build a sense of ownership
- Better education and action to address child abuse.
- Examine barriers to healthy development efforts
- Provide more education opportunities, particularly around parenting skills

Groups, individuals and professionals in the community need more information about who is doing what in the community. A number of participants had questions about some local groups including Youth to Youth programs and Voices for Children. Programs need to look at how they can make their resources more accessible and available. Collaboration of service providers and networks of services are important to develop and preserve. More coordination is needed. These networks will also prevent needless duplication of services in the community.

Individuals and organizations need to review and declare where possible support for recommendations in the Connections for Kids report, the Municipal Strategy and the Civic Strategy. Declared support will help to strengthen the collaborative work to meet established goals for the community. Organizations could then go on to establish more specific actions they could take to advance work toward the goals and community commitments noted in these documents. Agencies should go on to bring child advocacy

issues to the forefront of their communications and note for the community how the charter and other elements of community plans are reflected in their practice.

Educators, family physicians, service providers, the non-profit sector and the media need to be involved in implementing action to improve child welfare. There was some criticism of the image of youth that is projected in the media. There should also be more youth involved in these community workshops and in guiding the delivery of services. People need more information about the connection between early development and prevention and the value of programs from infancy to pre-schoolers and on through childhood development.

Youth need to be a driving force in the decision-making process. The 'grassroots' people should be identifying issues and describing what they want then taking action to seek out funding resources. The sustainability of initiatives remains a responsibility at the community level. Young people still need the support of adults in this process to see that initiatives come to fruition but youth need to be given ownership of age appropriate initiatives.

Youth need a better understanding of where they can access resources, programs and services. We need a community inventory of services. These services also need to be available in a way that will allow young people to feel comfortable in accessing them. Schools have something to offer here and should be open evenings and weekends for community use as community centers. Parenting resources or centers are also needed in more communities.

There was a clear expression of concern about violence in families and the need to educate kids and teens about it. Participants suggested better tracking of at risk families, better reporting of suspected child abuse and better education of professionals who work with children about reporting abuse. Better education of children about abuse might enable them to come forward about these experiences.

Apprenticeship programs, programs that provide opportunities for job training, alternative education programs are all seen as valuable particularly for disenfranchised youth. The Ministry of Education should improve funding and programs to support part-time education programs for young people. Schools and communities need to work together to create more extra-curricular activities to promote a sense of belonging for youth to the community. The youth serving police officers at work in the community are a useful and valuable resource and there should be more of them. Community based policing works. There should be more opportunities for children to volunteer to gain experience and knowledge. Youth need to be involved and challenged to build self-esteem and improve their mental health.

The matter of housing and youth needs will also have to be addressed. It would be useful to have a local 'child advocate' agency and a permanent position for a 'youth manager' or 'youth coordinator'. There was a suggestion that the Charter also include a statement that ensured that all parents have a safe home, food and other necessities in order to adequately support the healthy development of their children. There are concerns about the supports or access to services that youth in the rural areas have. Transportation access is a barrier.

Another barrier is language for those young people from cultural minorities. More attention should be paid to community diversity.

Programs need to do more outreach to encourage youth to participate. It was suggested that another statement be added to the Children's Charter that would note that children have the right to be free of injury, illness and disease when as teens they are entering the workforce.

Services need to be available to all children, not just those at high risk. Still, there is a concern for the population that falls through the cracks in the system. Don't give up on adolescents with struggles. They are still in need of service and services can make an impact at this age. More education in parenting should be available to teenagers. We need more understanding of teenage pregnancies. Some suggested mandatory parenting programs for high-risk individuals. In any case, there should be more prenatal education programs on parenting, at birth education programs on parenting and more counselling services available to teens and parents.

Another community forum should be held to review progress on these recommendations in the community. This process should also be linked to other symposiums in the youth sector such as the Asset Building Coalition and the Voices for Children network.

Workshop: Policy Development

Key messages:

- Develop policies that have clear consideration for healthy development of children
- Inventory neighbourhood development initiatives
- Strengthen the education process to improve understanding of child development needs

Policies on healthy child development need to be integrated into community process at all levels. Our community needs strong leadership from key members, stakeholders and governments on issues related to healthy child development.

The community needs a clear plan for action to support good practice on child development initiatives. A plan would bring focus and a sense of direction to community action. It would also facilitate collaboration by community organizations and services with government initiatives. The plan should reflect the unique qualities and issues of this community and include consideration for all children in the community.

We need an inventory of current neighbourhood development initiatives to better recognize and support community action that is already taking place. This inventory would also be a useful tool to better inform community members and local elected officials of needs and actions. Parents also need to be better-informed and educated about early child development needs and ways of supporting healthy development.

Early childhood education programs have a clear benefit that would seem to justify greater public investment in these services. Polices which promote, sustain and finance quality early childhood education should be adopted. We also need stronger public policy that provides more support to families with children. It is important to work through families to support healthy child development. The federal child tax benefit is recognized as a helpful policy/program that is providing useful support to most families with children. There are still concerns about the high rate of child poverty in the community and the need to address this issue.

These and other policy issues could be further developed by the formation of a local advisory committee on early childhood development issues. This committee would work with local councilors, members of parliament and others to promote greater awareness and understanding of early years issues and appropriate policies to develop as a result.

A model for coordination of services is the integration resource hub which links children with matters related to child care centers, centers providing supports to children with special needs and children with other social needs. Our community could benefit from having a Children's Advocate. This person or office would have responsibility for supporting a coordinated network of services, identifying important policy issues and opportunities as well as supporting the continual development of a municipal strategy for children.

Policy benefiting the healthy development of children needs to be developed with greater support and involvement from the business sector, the faith community and cultural minority groups in our community. Creating a civil society is an appropriate target in the long run to create a social environment that supports the healthy development of children.

The value of support to children as an aid to their healthy development needs to be widely and better understood by community members.

Workshops: Business Role in Supporting Children and Youth

Key Messages:

- Improve information sharing
- Engage large and small corporations as partners
- Add business representatives to coordinating committee

The entire community, including business representatives, must better understand the information being presented on the healthy development needs of children and the range of community services and supports necessary to address these needs. There are businesses in the community that are engaged in addressing children's issues and they need to continue to provide leadership in this area. Business interests in the community will need to be better integrated into the information sharing system on child development issues to be an effective partner. Currently information sharing is not taking place in an effective way.

To spread the word there should be more communication with business leaders. Information should be developed using language that is familiar to business people rather than language familiar to people in children's services. Business people would find it useful to have available a one-page description of each service available in the community that is providing a service or support to the community or a directory of services directed to children. There should be good information about the needs and value of early childhood education.

To inform people events that bring together and inform volunteers from the business sector, such as this Symposium, are effective. Breakfast meetings, meetings at the Chamber of Commerce and similar events are useful ways of informing the community.

It is important to educate people about the community they work in and inform businesses and their employees about issues relating to children which are important. Information should connect with the communities where people are doing business with the purpose of improving conditions where they do business. A community mapping of services and actions would be a useful tool for informing businesses and others.

A partnership approach to issues should reflect a balance of interests rather than rely too much or too little on the role of businesses in addressing children's issues. Partnerships should form to work with the community. Large corporations like Dofasco and small businesses too should be included in this process. A partnership with the Chamber of Commerce would be useful. It is important to understand corporate culture in order to form good strategies for involving business interests in this issue.

Partnerships that bring together businesses, City departments and community agencies should be form to take advantage of the funding and other benefits these collaborations can offer. Early Years initiatives being announced by the Provincial government require matching corporate funding. Strong partnerships will increase supports for local initiatives and better link business, agencies and the community grass roots in taking community action to benefit children.

Public recognition of employers who are meeting employees needs by implementing 'family friendly' workplace policies would help to inform the community as well as provide good models for other employers. Businesses and corporations could also be encouraged to sponsor more facilities and programs that provide a benefit to children. Research on families locally which benefit from a supportive workplace or business would be helpful in better understanding how workplaces can be structured and how this benefits children.

A list of tangible ways businesses could support healthy child development would be useful to assist corporations in participating. A role for business would include response to public policy and new legislation that may have benefits or negative impacts on family and community capacity to support the nurturing and development of children. One noted example was recent Provincial legislation to lengthen the workweek to sixty hours. Research should be carried out to identify where corporations locally have made a commitment to children as the major focus of their charitable work.

Strategies proposed to inform and involve business interests included forming a committee which brings together human resource people from the corporate sector with senior levels of support to devise ways of getting messages into the business community. Encouraging stronger support of municipal government to the Children's Charter and continued development of a clear municipal strategy for addressing children's well-being were actions which could be supported by businesses. Outreach to more businesses in the community to inform them and move our local children's strategy forward were recommended actions.

Workshop: Health

Key messages

- Partnerships are important strategies
- Increased funding and policy support are needed
- Health promotion and prevention strategies are very important
- Improve understanding and awareness of the community initiatives currently in place

Partnerships are important strategies in this community because no one person or organization acting alone can be as effective as a collaboration or partnership effort. This needs to be a grassroots movement. Partnerships such as those in the Public Health department and Healthy Babies programs are good models and show the value of linking to other partners and other agencies to extend our capacity to meet local needs. Partnerships also help us as a community to better provide service through already existing programs and supports. We also need to recognize that forming and maintaining partnerships is work and needs space and resources. Networking coalition building is valued and useful.

Increased funding and policy supports are needed. New methods of working together are being developed and people need to be able to use low cast but highly effective strategies. Teleconferencing for example is a good tool for information sharing and providing support but we have not invested in making these available. There are other examples that may be practical strategies and need to be used. People still need to see and meet together and these efforts too, should be supported.
Transportation is still a barrier for many in accessing services and supports. More funding is required to help with transportation costs. More service provider users and others need to be engaged in seeking increased funding support.

Health promotion and prevention strategies are very important. They are in the long term effective and will increase community capacity in other ways. Focus on health promotions and prevention occurs in many environments. The efforts of the District Health Council in planning can ensure planning is being done effectively as they have a close liaison with groups in the community. The smoking by-law is a good example of a prevention strategy. In this case as with others, building coalitions for support of change results in more political clout for change.

Improve understanding and awareness of the community initiatives currently in place. This would ensure wide based participation resulting from a wide base of knowledge - for example supervisors of all local day care centers could meet regularly to share information. Information from other sources could be shared through formation of a multidisciplinary committee. There are still too many instances of agencies that do not know what others are doing.

Workshop: Research

Key Messages:

- Research has an important role to play
- set targets for community success on healthy child development
- Research and evaluation need to be understood

Research has an important role to play in developing our knowledge about healthy child development and the best strategies for promoting healthy development. The research that is done needs to be well funded in order for it to be reliable and helpful. Longitudinal studies are particularly valuable but also very expensive. For this type of research to be useful long term funding commitments are required but not often available.

Good use should also be made of information that is currently available in existing databases but the security for privacy of that information needs to be respected and protected. When research reports are written it is important that they be used in changing or reinforcing best practices. It is also important to review the research process in the community to evaluate and renew it in terms of focus and outcomes.

It is important to set targets for community success on healthy child development and then measuring our progress toward those targets. School readiness programs and parenting skill programs are good examples of initiatives for which long term goals can be set and consistent data collection done to measure community success. It is not always clear how research can be turned into action including influencing the political agenda but this seems an important step in building community capacity. The Social Planning and Research Council needs to continue leadership in this area and help the community learn how to ask right question and work with researchers to find the answers.

Research and evaluation need to be understood and useful to practitioners, parents and others. Research needs to be well understood in order to be useful or applied at the community level. To facilitate this, more interactions between researchers and practitioners would be useful. Public education processes are also useful for turning knowledge into practice. There is a dichotomy between research and evaluation. When programs or services are created the evaluation process should be part of the initial design of the service and so is important to address at the outset when new services are created or existing services dramatically changed.

There is an important place for research in determining how we can create preventative rather than reactive strategies for the community.

Workshops: Community Based Initiatives

Key messages:

- Increase information sharing on services and supports
- Improve networks and partnerships in services to children
- Need for coordination and leadership on these issues
- Develop community maps of services, resources and actions
- Support broad volunteer involvement in initiatives

People need to be more aware of the programs and services out there. Parents and children alike need more knowledge of and exposure to programs and other community supports. Community members as well as professionals need to make a commitment to becoming more familiar with the services that are in the community and contribute to a process of informing others. Other systems are useful in getting information out to the community. Strategies need to include everything from advertising, to use of local television cable stations, newspaper articles, recreation centers, churches, community-based police officers, businesses and schools to increase awareness of services and supports. Information needs to be available in different languages in order to better serve the whole community. It would for example be useful to translate the Children's Charter of Rights and the Municipal Strategy for Children into different languages.

Networks need to be developed which facilitate the circulation and availability of information. These communication strategies must also take account of the immigrant population in Hamilton and language barriers they may face. The development of websites and Internet based information would be helpful. Although computers and the Internet can be useful communication tools, we must remember that there are still many people who are not able to access information through this technology. Partnerships in the community have a lot to offer in terms of developing community-based initiatives.

Children and youth should be involved in the process of defining what programs, supports or services are needed. Neighbourhood based discussions would also be useful in defining community issues and strategies for supports to children. To involve community members more extensively it was suggested that more volunteer opportunities be encouraged in schools, that support be provided for community newsletters, the private home day care services in communities be supported to encourage more participation in their work to support the healthy development of children.

The process of involving more community members should facilitate intergenerational participation. It should include children, university students, parents and seniors. Strategies for involvement need to include culturally diverse populations and support their efforts to identify issues and effective community based responses. Volunteerism is seen

as an important part of this initiative. It can help to build relationships, involve people, particularly youth, who might otherwise not effectively participate.

One of the great advantages of community based initiatives is that it challenges the fear that children and families will 'get lost' in the large arena of a city wide strategy. Local initiatives support small gatherings at the neighbourhood level and encourage local partnerships and actions. Community mapping can be useful at this level. Local schools are also important resources to support local actions. Still, community action needs resources and support. Staff support, access to other supports for meetings and other infrastructure is important to facilitating community-based initiatives.

There is a need for activities for kids in the community. In some communities there are inadequate structured programs and supports in place to engage children in constructive activity. Where there are programs available, it appears that not all children participate or make use of community based resources. Strategies need to be developed which encourage all children, and particularly those in need to come out.

Some direction on actions to take should come from a community plan that also identifies good models for community-based initiatives and their development. Suggestions included developing more storefront style services to increased access to legal and medical services. Family home visitor programs were also noted as a valuable community resource and that these and other public health and other social worker services need to be more available to communities where needed. Different areas of the city have different services, different experiences, expectations and even different populations in terms of 'risk'. Strategies for community based action should then take account of these unique characteristics. Actions across the community need to be guided by a community plan and be supported by a coordinating body that the community can identify with and link to for action.

More needs assessment work would add to our understanding of the community and those neighbourhoods that might benefit most from the development of increased supports or other action. This process would also build a database of information that would be useful in understanding our response to children across the community. It would also facilitate the transfer of information about community services and initiatives. We need to generate information 'maps' of community initiatives, clearly identify gaps and use this information to understand what action should be taken next. This information base can also be useful in evaluating our progress as a community in responding to the healthy development needs of children.

Building assets and strengths in children should be a key consideration in developing community-based initiatives. A problem based approach is familiar to most as a way of understanding communities and children's needs but it tends to reinforce a sense of the problem rather than direct attention to strengths to build on. Gathering and sharing success stories is important to the process of building on assets.

There was a sense that we need to look at developing community-based initiatives that would address the needs of children from their earliest years of development through

childhood and adolescence. Action should be taken now to mobilize the City Council, service providers and others to follow-up on this process and the direction provided by the community. Long term strategies for investing in children will provide the most benefit. There was agreement that the responsibility for children in our community is ultimately everyone's responsibility and so everyone should find a way to be involved.

Discussion Themes

Several themes emerge when the discussion record of groups is analysed. These themes are identified as a result of different groups independently arriving at similar statements or recommendations independent of each other's process. This recurrence of an idea or recommendation indicates that it may be a priority or at least an idea that is more broadly supported than some others. In view of this, these are ideas which should be considered first for action as a follow up to the Symposium.

There were eight recurring themes that will be identified here in order of apparent importance, beginning with the one that was most often identified followed by those noted less frequently.

The strongest recurring message was that participants felt we should be improving the information available to the community on programs and services of benefit to children. In many cases participants felt that by improving information and its availability or accessibility we could use existing resources to their full potential. This would increase the efficiency of the system and lead to gains in the short term.

Another theme or idea often recommended was that as a community we continue to invest in building partnerships and working collaboratively to address children's needs in the community. As a component of this people often suggested that we invest as a community in more training and education on best practices and new research being done to ensure we are well informed as we develop strategies and services for the community.

Participants noted, in a related theme, the need for community mapping activity that would better identify needs, trends, characteristics and services in the community. This mapping would strengthen the information base needed to support effective community response. This also suggests the value of continuing to invest in research in our community to better understand child development issues. Support for research was well noted as an important activity in the community strategic response to children's issues. The research should extend to evaluation of strategies to ensure we are continually getting feedback as a community on the impact or benefit of our efforts to improve conditions.

Several discussion groups noted that programs and services are underfunded. This is a matter of growing concern and needs to be addressed. A number of groups concluded that increased funding for families and services is clearly needed as part of the solution to improving outcomes for children.

Our community needs to increase community participation in this process. Still too few people are aware of the issues. More community involvement, and broader community involvement is needed. That is, groups were recommending that other sectors of the community become involved in the process of exploring and improving conditions for children. There is a place for greater private sector involvement and greater involvement of youth in this process to name a few.

Hamilton also needs a strategy that reflects and responds to the cultural diversity in this community. This is particularly important in Hamilton as we have a growing and increasingly diverse population. Community involvement strategies need to reflect this and strategies for service development, research and investment need to reflect this characteristic of the community.

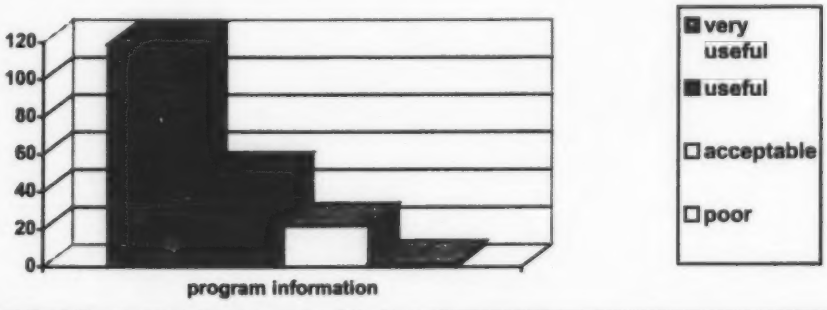
A number of discussion groups noted that we need to continue to build community awareness generally about children's issues and conditions. This awareness in many ways is seen as essential to building strength and momentum to the whole process of creating a widely understood and well supported community strategy to improve outcomes for children in Hamilton.

Evaluation of the Symposium

Each participant received a registration kit that included a one-page evaluation form inviting comment and feedback on the day's program. There were 197 evaluation forms returned providing a 41% response rate.

Participants reported a high degree of satisfaction with most aspects of the Symposium. Advance materials were seen as effective preparation. The registration kits were valued as useful information for the program. Speakers and panelists were considered informative and stimulating although the speakers' roster may have provided for more presentations than optimally required. Some exchange between audience and presenters would have improved the program.

Workshop discussions were considered useful although in many cases too short to discuss fully issues that participants want to talk about. There is a clear interest in having this event followed up with action and another Symposium or community workshop in one year's time.



Conclusion And Next Steps

A detailed report is available through the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton or it's website at www.sprc.hamilton.on.ca to provide a readily available reference to the Symposium proceedings and detailed information about the program presentations and group discussions.

The results of the Symposium will become a reference document for the City of Hamilton to encourage continued support from the Municipal Government on action to create a community plan or comprehensive strategy to meet the needs of children in Hamilton.

Committee members and volunteers also anticipate working towards the preparation of an annual update report of progress on the issues and recommendations noted by participants in this Symposium. Another symposium in 2003 is also recommended.

APPENDIX I

Children's Charter of Rights

Children, like all human beings, are entitled to fundamental rights and freedoms. Because of their unique vulnerability, it is incumbent upon adults and the communities in which they live, to ensure that children are safe from exploitation and neglect and have access to a fair share of the society's resources. While parents have the primary responsibility for their children's care and upbringing, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child makes it clear that governments have a duty to help protect the rights of children. Not only is this the right thing to do but local and national evidence has clearly demonstrated it is the best investment in our future.

All Our Children:

1. **have the right to preserve and maintain their ethnic, cultural, spiritual and/or religious identity; and to be protected from racism and discrimination.**

2. **are entitled to a standard of living that ensures healthy physical, cognitive, emotional and social development and a good quality of life.**

3. **must have adequate nutrition on a daily basis.**

4. **must have housing which is safe, secure, accessible[i] and appropriate for healthy development.**

5. **are entitled to spend sufficient time with their families[ii] and/or other nurturing and positive role models throughout their childhood.**

6. **will have access to high quality child care/early education programs designed to ensure the healthy development of that child.**

7. **are entitled to receive "holistic education"[iii] and/or training or apprenticeships to enable them to reach their full potential.**

8. **are entitled to a continuum of information and resources enabling children, family and caregivers to make informed decisions concerning health and well-being.**

9. **will have access to recreational resources and leisure activities, in the form a play, creative expression and/or skill development.**

10. are entitled to the "highest attainable level of health, [iv] and the assurance that the resources necessary to ensure life-long good health, including pre-natal life, are available and accessible.

11. have the right to be served by governments, at all levels, which demonstrate their responsibility to improve the health and well-being of children and work co-operatively to ensure adequate funding and policies for children's programs.

12. have the right to be protected from physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect both in the home and in the community.

The foregoing rights shall apply to all our children without discrimination according to race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, ability / disability, ethnic origin, language, region, property or class, religion, source of income or any other distinction. This may entail the use of affirmative action or equity programs in order to redress situations of special individual, community or regional disadvantage.

[1] Accessible refers to physical and financial accessibility.
[1] Families may include: parents, legal guardians, relatives and care-givers.
[1] Holistic education refers not only to established academic subjects, but also to the study of areas such as: art,
music, drama, health vocations and physical education
[1] Highest attainable level of health as defined by the World Health Organization

Supported by City of Hamilton Council at May 16, 2000 Council Meeting.

APPENDIX II

Connections for Kids Report 1998

In the Fall of 1997 the Industry Education Council of Hamilton-Wentworth held public forums on the link between child poverty and learning. The participants came to the following conclusions for action:

With a view to coordinate efforts, explore what's "currently going on" in order to identify resources and service gaps.
- *Adopt a family-first model for allocating resources.*
- *Encourage community involvement and volunteerism.*
- *Establish a clearing-house of available resources.*
- *Establish community-based action committees.*
- *Increase public awareness regarding the impact of child poverty on community health.*
- *Develop and execute a media campaign to generate increased public awareness of child poverty.*
- *Form a small working group comprised of representatives from local service providers and other organizations.(November 17 1997)*

The working group met twelve times over an eight-month period in 1997-98. It consulted widely with many agencies and individuals in this community with a concern about children and wrote a report that identified the following issues:

- *Services for children are fragmented and there is no integrated community-wide planning focus.*
- *There is often a lack of awareness by the community of what children need for their well-being and healthy development.*
- *The community has a responsibility for the nurturing of children;"it takes a community to raise a child".*
- *There is a strong link between poverty and school failure.*

The report made the following recommendations grouped under workshop headings:

Recommendations relating to ***Early Years Initiatives:***

1.That the importance to children and families of well-funded and well planned-health promotion and prevention strategies such as the following be recognized: Healthy Babies/Healthy Children, Community Action Program for Children (CAPC), the Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP), and family literacy projects such as Family Language Advisory Group (FLAG).

2.That early-childhood education be supported.

3.That the educational, health, and social needs of high-risk groups, such as adolescent mothers, be explored and addressed by service-providers and boards of education.

4.That local children's organizations collaborate with the non-profit organization Voices for Children to ensure that messages about the needs of children are congruent and relevant to local issues.

*Recommendations relating to **School Age Years Initiatives:***

1.That children be educated about their rights and obligations through the use of programs such as Save the Children's Youth to Youth program.

2.That local children's organizations collaborate with the non-profit organization Voices for Children to ensure that messages about the needs of children are congruent and relevant to local issues.

*Recommendations relating to **Youth Supporting Initiatives:***

1. That children be educated about their rights and obligations through the use of programs such as Save the Children's Youth to Youth program.

2. That the educational, health, and social needs of high-risk groups, such as adolescent mothers, be explored and addressed by service-providers and boards of education.

3. That local children's organizations collaborate with the non-profit organization Voices for Children to ensure that messages about the needs of children are congruent and relevant to local issues.

*Recommendations relating to **Business Role in Supporting Children and Youth:***

1. That there be public recognition of employers who display corporate citizenship through support of community initiatives and family-friendly employee practices.

2. That organisational links and resource networks be established among corporations, foundations and service providers.

3. That local non-profit and corporate organizations concerned about children's issues be encouraged to become part of the Ontario Campaign for Kids.

4. That the proposed network to promote neighbourhood-based initiatives (see recommendations under community based initiatives) develop a "wish list" of items required by citizens working in neighbourhood-based initiatives to be shared with potential donor/volunteers. This list would include items requiring monetary donations, tasks for volunteers, items requiring administrative support or the use of equipment.

5. That a Connections for Kids web site be established to both exchange community information and to advertise needs (as in recommendation above).

*Recommendations relating to **Research**:*

1.That local children's well-being be monitored through:

- Indicators used to measure progress towards the Region's Vision 2020.
- The Social Planning and Research Council's Well-Being Index for Hamilton-Wentworth.
- The Canadian Centre for Studies of Children at Risk's "Keeping Score" on Kids in Hamilton-Wentworth project.

2. The establishment of a workgroup with representatives from a wide range of community groups to:

- initiate a network to promote neighbourhood-based initiatives;
- provide information, consultation, and education about topics such as community development and proposal-writing;
- facilitate partnerships among groups interested in community development and community organizations, both in the public and private sectors, that support this work;

*Recommendations relating to **Health**:*

1. That the importance to children and families of well-funded and well planned-health promotion and prevention strategies such as the following be recognised: Healthy Babies/Healthy Children, Community Action Program for Children (CAPC), the Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP), and family literacy projects such as Family Language Advisory Group (FLAG).

2. That the educational, health, and social needs of high-risk groups, such as adolescent mothers, be explored and addressed by service-providers and boards of education.

3. The establishment of a workgroup with representatives from a wide range of community groups to:

- initiate a network to promote neighbourhood-based initiatives;
- provide information, consultation, and education about topics such as community development and proposal-writing;
- facilitate partnerships among groups interested in community development and community organizations, both in the public and private sectors, that support this work;
- advocate for stable resource allocation to community development in relevant community organizations to provide "hands on" assistance to community groups;
- apply for ongoing funding to support neighbourhood-based action;
- advocate for continued municipal support for community development.

4. That local children's organizations collaborate with the non-profit organisation Voices for Children to ensure that messages about the needs of children are congruent and relevant to local issues.

Recommendations relating to Policy Development:

1. That the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth develop and adopt its own civic Children's Strategy.

2. That the importance to children and families of well-funded and well planned-health promotion and prevention strategies such as the following be recognized: Healthy Babies/Healthy Children, Community Action Program for Children (CAPC), the Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP), and family literacy projects such as Family Language Advisory Group (FLAG).

3. The establishment of a workgroup with representatives from a wide range of community groups to:

- initiate a network to promote neighbourhood-based initiatives;
- provide information, consultation, and education about topics such as community development and proposal-writing;
- facilitate partnerships among groups interested in community development and community organizations, both in the public and private sectors, that support this work;
- advocate for stable resource allocation to community development in relevant community organizations to provide "hands on" assistance to community groups;
- apply for ongoing funding to support neighbourhood-based action;
- advocate for continued municipal support for community development .

4. That early-childhood education be supported

5. That the educational, health, and social needs of high-risk groups, such as adolescent mothers, be explored and addressed by service-providers and boards of education.

6. That local children's well-being be monitored through:

- Indicators used to measure progress towards the Region's Vision 2020.
- The Social Planning and Research Council's Well-Being Index for Hamilton-Wentworth.
- The Canadian Centre for Studies of Children at Risk's "Keeping Score" on Kids in Hamilton-Wentworth project.

7. That key organisations, such as planning bodies like the District Health Council and the Social Planning and Research Council, and funding organisations such as the United Way and the Hamilton Community Foundation, be encouraged to use the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the National Goals for Healthy Child and Youth Development, and the Hamilton-Wentworth Civic Children's Strategy that is developed with respect to children.

8. That Boards of Education actively support the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the National Goals for Healthy Child and Youth Development, and the Hamilton-Wentworth Civic Children's Strategy that is developed with respect to children, by promoting them in all their policies and practices.

9. That local children's organizations collaborate with the non-profit organization Voices for Children to ensure that messages about the needs of children are congruent and relevant to local issues

10. That local non-profit and corporate organizations concerned about children's issues be encouraged to become part of the Ontario Campaign for Kids.

11. That organizational links and resource networks be established among corporations, foundations and service providers.

12. That Federal, Provincial and Municipal governments be advised of the needs of the children in this community as identified by Connections for Kids

13. That children be educated about their rights and obligations through the use of programs such as Save the Children's Youth to Youth program.

14. That an alliance of local children's organizations make an application to the Federal program to establish a Centre of Excellence for Children's Well-Being in Hamilton-Wentworth

Recommendations relating to Community Based Initiatives:

1. The establishment of a workgroup with representatives from a wide range of community groups to:

- initiate a network to promote neighbourhood-based initiatives;
- provide information, consultation, and education about topics such as community development and proposal-writing;
- facilitate partnerships among groups interested in community development and community organizations, both in the public and private sectors, that support this work;
- advocate for stable resource allocation to community development in relevant community organizations to provide "hands on" assistance to community groups;
- apply for ongoing funding to support neighbourhood-based action;
- advocate for continued municipal support for community development.

2. That a Connections for Kids web site be established to both exchange community information (as in recommendation above) and to advertise needs (as in recommendation following).

3. That the newly-established network (see above) develop a "wish list" of items required by citizens working in neighbourhood-based initiatives to be shared with potential donor/volunteers. This list would include items requiring monetary donations, tasks for volunteers, items requiring administrative support or the use of equipment.

4. That Community Information Services be encouraged to provide information on existing community groups and networks to those interested in community action/development.

5. That the support of groups, such as the Social Planning and Research Council in providing administrative support to small community-based organizations, be acknowledged.

APPENDIX III

Participants of Symposium

Children's Symposium - January 31st. 2001

First	Last	Organization
Julia	Abel	Hamilton-Wentworth District Health Council
Maria	Agro	Affiliated Services for Children and Youth
Deb	Alexander	CONTACT Hamilton
Angelica	Allen	Hamilton Public Library
Richard	Allen	Industry Education Council of Hamilton-Wentworth
Wanda	Amer	YMCA
Patricia	Amos	Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
Elsie	Anderson	Hamilton & District Council of Co-op Preschools Corp.
Marg	Anderson-Herrmann	United Generations Ontario
Janet	Arsenault	Girl Guides of Canada
Sandra	Atley	Junior League of Hamilton Burlington
Doug	Baker	Principal, Hess Street, South
Tamara	Bakos	Hamilton Public Library Workplace Childcare Centre
Rebecca	Barrows Vrankulj	Social and Public Health Services
Dorothy	Bartalos	
Tom	Bartlett	Family Connections Counselling
Diane	Bascombe	Centre for Voluntary Sector, Carlton Univ.
Liana	Bates	City of Hamilton
Brenda	Bax	Social and Public Health Services
Rufus	Bayley	Third Sector
Ronald	Bayne	Violence Prevention Hamilton-Wentworth
Rick	Beauchamp	Ministry of Community and Social Services
Tara-Lea	Beaudoin	Culture Recreation - Central - City of Hamilton
Corey	Beaudoin	City of Hamilton
Pat	Beer	YMCA, Family St. Thomas - Elgin
Gail	Belisario	Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
Jacki	Belisario	Umbrella Family & Child Centres
Helen	Benoit	Hamilton Public Library
Bryan	Bereziuk	Hamilton Community Foundation Youth Advisory Community
Carmen	Bian	Social & Public Health Services
Judith	Bishop	HWDSB - Trustee
Christine	Bjelan	Social and Public Health Services
Jennifer	Bodnaruk	North Hamilton Community Health Centre
Pat	Bossert	HWDSB, Section 19
Trish	Bouskill	YSAN - c/o STAR
Susan	Boychuk	Ministry of Labour
Shelley	Bradaric	Waterdown District Children's Centre
Mickey	Bradford	
Jessica	Brennan	
Patrick	Brennan	District Health Council of Hamilton-Wentworth
Kate	Breznik	Mohawk College
Bonnie	Bridle	Social and Public Health Services, Parent & Child Branch
Christene	Briks	Community Child Abuse Council of Canada
Sharon	Brooks	

Raye	Brooks	Social & Public Health Services
Christine	Brown	Today's Family
Gina	Browne	McMaster University
Lauren	Brydges	Today's Family - Saltfleet
Linda	Bryers	Today's Family
Don	Buchanan	Children's Hospital, Hamilton Health Services
Bonnie	Buchanan	Cornerstone Youth Services
Ann	Buchanan	YMCA, Family St. Thomas - Elgin
Alison	Buffett	Ontario Federation of Home & School Assoc.
Heather	Burbridge	Junior League of Hamilton Burlington
Jan	Burke-Gaffney	Hamilton Family Network
Karen	Burrows	Hamilton Health Sciences Corp.
Kate	Bursey	Junior League of Hamilton Burlington
Donna	Burtis	North Hamilton Community Health Centre
Dianne	Busser	Social & Public Health Services
Amanda	Byrne	Today's Family
Carolyn	Byrne	McMaster University
Vicki	Calcutt	YMCA, Family St. Thomas - Elgin
Karyn	Callaghan	Mohawk College ECE Dept.
Karen	Calligan	St. Vincent de Paul School Council
Sylvia	Cameron	Hamilton YWCA
Marney	Campbell	Umbrella Family & Child Centres
Sharon	Campbell	YMCA
Connie	Carey-Bianco	Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha School
Nancy	Carter	Childrens Hospital, Hamilton Health Sciences Corp.
Lina	Caruso	
Monica	Cerantola	Social and Public Health Services
Theresa	Chabot	Jamesville Children's Centre
Aline	Chan	Scouts Canada
Alice	Chan	Today's Family
Lucie	Charest-Hukui	Social and Public Health Services
Sharon	Charters	Hamilton Community Foundation
Leakhema	Chea	Parents Helping Parents Facilitator
Mike	Cheeseman	City of Hamilton
Rose	Chernish	Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha School
Brenna	Christian	
Sandy	Ciprietti	Today's Family
Jamie	Ckeray	
Renee	Clark	Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic Child Care Ct.
Judy	Clarke	Carlisle PALS
Dr. Jean	Clinton	Voices for Children Hamilton
Deb	Clinton	Hamilton Housing Corporation
Ann	Coburn	Volunteer Centre
Diane	Collins	Hamilton Children's Museum
Nicole	Condari	Community Adolescent Network of Hamilton
Tina	Connelly	Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club
Terry	Cooke	Fluke Transport, Chief Operating Officer
Karen	Copeland	Community Family Treatment Service Chedoke Child and Family Centre
Bonnie	Corey	
Neil	Cosby	CONTACT Hamilton
Karen	Craig	Living Rock
Mary	Craig	Hamilton Community Foundation

Bob	Crawford	Guiding Hard Inc.
Debbie	Crickmore	McMaster
Bernadette	Curtis	Ted McMeekin MPP
Christopher	Cutler	Hamilton Community Foundation Youth Advisory Community
Jan	Czerwinski	Social and Public Health Services
Caroline	D'Ortenzio	Sexual Assault Centre - Hamilton-Wentworth
Anda	Dabols	Today's Family
Duane	Dahl	Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club
Carrie	Daniels	Royal Botanical Gardens
Cherie-	Daniels	Hamilton Community Foundation Youth Advisory Community
Angela	Dauda	St. Matthews House
Jessica	Davenport	Community Child Abuse Council
Susan	Davis	Playtime Day Nursery
Jennifer	Davy	Social and Public Health Services
Sarah	Deakin	The Salvation Army - Community & Family Services
Andrew	Debicki	Wraparound Hamilton c/o Lynwod Hall Child and Family Centre
Hank	DeJonge	Mission Services of Hamilton- True North Child and Youth
Kathleen	Dekker	Chedoke Child & Family Centre/Early Words
Suesy	Demelo	YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington
John	Denson	
Elske	DeVisch Eybergen	Wraparound Hamilton c/o Lynwod Hall Child and Family Centre
Vicki	DiDonato	Blessed Sacrament Elementary School
Paola	DiLalla	
Lisa	Dodd	YMCA of Oakville
Linda	Dorr	Community Family Treatment Service Chedoke Child and Family Centre
Cindy	Down	Lincoln Alexander Children's Centre
Vicki	Downie	Lynwood Hall Child & Family Centre
Kathleen	Doy	CAPC
Jenna	Drummond-Young	Hamilton Community Foundation Youth Advisory Community
Linda	Drysdale	Hamilton Health Sciences
Celine	Duguay	Francophone Community Health Centre
Vicki	Earle	Hamilton Wentworth District School Board
Beth Anne	Elliott	
Karen	Elliott	Housing Help Centre
Brenda	Espinola	Today's Family
Jill	Esposto	St. Martins Manor Catholic Family Services
Peter	Evans	Week of the Child and Youth
Lynn	Evans	YMCA of Oakville
Mark	Ewer	Ed, Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton Wentworth
Alison	Fainbloom	Housing Help Centre
Helen	Farkas	
Shari	Farrell	City of Hamilton
Bobbyjo	Fehr	North Hamilton Community Health Centre
Allan	Feldman	Hamilton Health Sciences Corp.
Mark	Felvus	Youth Net Volunteer Organization
Shawna	Ferris	YMCA
Oksana	Fisher	CONTACT Hamilton
Marni	Flaherty	Today's Family
Michael	Fleming	City of Hamilton Police Services
Shannon	Folland	CAPC
Lynne	Foote	CONTACT Hamilton
Paula	Forbes	St. Martin's Manor

Craig	Foye	SPRC
Paul	Fralick	ECE Program - Mohawk College
Tara-Lynn	Franco	Mayor Wade's Office City of Hamilton
Norma	Frankoff	Wellwood Resource Centre
Tanis	Freeborn	Hamilton Community Foundation Youth Advisory Community
Dr. John	Frid	Rotary Club of Hamilton
Anna	Frigault	Family Ministry Office
Laurene	Gandin	City of Hamilton
Debbie	Garbe	Counsultant
Sam	Gardner	Canadain Centre for Studies of Children at Risk
Daljit	Garry	Affiliated Services for Children and Youth
Lynn	Gates	Concession Street Neighbourhoods Community Council
Jessie	Gavran	Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic Child Care Ct.
Cathy	Gazzola	
Jackie	Gazzola	Mohawk College
Vivian	Geromella	Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board
Beverley	Ghilardi	St. Vincent de Paul Children's Centre
Marylynn	Gibson	
Nicola	Giles-Morreale	Department of Culture and Recreation City of Hamilton
Nicki	Glowacki	YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington
Dorothy	Goettler	Family Services of Hamilton Wentworth Inc.
Melanie	Goodrich-Filax	The Canadian Red Cross Society
Jackie	Gordon	CAPC
Raimonda	Gorishti	PHP
Tracy	Gorka	Community Family Treatment Service Chedoke Child and Family Centre
Pat	Gough	The Canadian Network for Community Development
Wendy	Gould	
Jane	Graves	Hamilton Public Library
Heather	Greene	Today's Family
Gordon	Greenway	Social and Public Health Services Child Adolescent Services,
Pati	Greenwood	YMCA
Mary Louise	Gregoire	School to Work Programs- BEC
Gail	Gregory	
Liyu	Guo	Campaign 2000
Sheila	Hagen	Social & Public Health Services
Karen	Haist	Social & Public Health Services
Scott	Haldane	YMCA
Maureen F.	Hall	Today's Family
Cheryle	Hals-Eisbrenner	United Generations Ontario
Gayle	Hamilton	City of Hamilton
Linda	Hancock	Chedoke Child & Family Centre
LeeAnn	Hand	YMCA of Oakville
Sarah	Harris	Children's Aid Society of Hamilton-Wentworth
Cathy	Hartman	Hamilton/Niagara Region - Minsitry of Community and Social Services
Martha	Harvie	CONTACT Hamilton
Brian	Hay	North Hamilton Community Health Centre
Simon	Hayens	North Hamilton Community Health Centre
Angie	Hayes	Children's Assessment Treatment Centre
Alison	Healing	President, Conserver Society
Lori	Heath	Hamilton Health Sciences Corp.
Terry	Henry	Dawn Patrol Child & Youth Services
Dorothy	Heuck	Culture and Rec. City of Hamilton- Westmount

Vince	Hill	Guiding Hard Inc.
Ann	Hill	St. Martin's Manor
Wes	Hill	North Hamilton Community Health Centre
Brigitte	Hill	Social and Public Health Services
Ilona	Hitchcock	Hamilton Public Library
Bernadette	Homerski	The Village Learning Centre
Susan	Honeyman	Early Words
Doreen	Horbach	HWCDSB Holdy Spirit School
Carrie	Horn	Umbrella Family & Child Centres
Andrea	Horwath	City of Hamilton, Alderman Ward 2
Kim	Houtmeyers	Hamilton Health Sciences
Lynn	Howarth	Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
Robbi	Howlett	Early Years Action Group Network
Heather	Hunter	Hamilton East Community Services
Catherine	Hutchinson	Infant Parent Program
David	Hutton	Delta Secondary School
Diane	Ing	
Katherine	Ingles	St. Martins Manor Catholic Family Services
David	Ingrassia	Hamilton Wentworth Police
Meghan	Inouye	STAR of Hamilton-Wentworth
Alex	Ivic	STAR of Hamilton-Wentworth
Judith	Jackson	Social & Public Health Services
Laurie	Jacques	YMCA of Oakville
Don	Jaffray	Social Planning & Research Council
Rebecca	James	Childrens Corner Family Resource Centre - Salvation Army - Gracehaven
Snijezana	Janosevic	CAPC
Glenna	Janzen	
Laurie	Jeandron	Umbrella Family & Child Centres
Leslie	Jeffries	Social and Public Health Services
Alyson	Johnson	SAM Program
Lorna	Johnston	Fessenden School Advisory Council
Virginia	Johnston	
Margaret	Jones	Hamilton Health Foundation - Children's Hospital
Wayne	Joudrie	Hamilton Wentworth District School Board
Heather	Kane	Carlisle PALS
Ruth	Kaulback	Mission Services of Hamilton- True North Child and Youth
Dale	Kern	Today's Family
Susanne	King	CanChild Centre for Childhood Disability Research
Lisa	Kiriakopoulos	Umbrella Family & Child Centres
Linda	Kisko	City of Hamilton - Hill Park Rec.
Kathleen	Kitching	Chedoke Child and Family Centre
Diana	Klodt	Social and Public Health Services
Judy	Kloosterman	CAPC
Randi	Knight	Chedoke Child and Family Centre
Cathy	Kohler	City of Hamilton
Jennifer	Koops	Mohawk College ECE Student
Tammy	Krbavac	Hamilton Children's Museum (Vol)
Donna	Krizanc	Catholic Family Services
Kristina	Kultesa	Wraparound Hamilton c/o Lynwod Hall Child and Family Centre
Ildiko	Kun	PHP
Madelen	Lachin	Today's Family
Pam	Lamontagne	St. Martin's Manor

Tina	Lampkin	
Melanie	Lane	Mission Services of Hamilton- True North Child and Youth
Chantal	Larochelle	Health Canada
Sandra	Law	Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
Yvonne	Lawlor	Social and Public Health Services, Parent & Child Branch
Christina	Lawson	Gordon Price School Council
Don	Lawson	Big Brothers Association of Burlingon Hamilton Wentworth
Faye	Lee	Dedwadadehsnye's Aboriginal Health Centre
Nancy	Lee-Colibaba	Royal Botanical Gardens
Kim	Legeard	Director of Dev. Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton
Jacquie	Leishman	City of Hamilton Police Services
George	Lewis	
Barbara	Lillico	Children's Secretariat
Anne Marie	Locas	Health Canada
Angela	Looergan	
Joanne	Loughlin	
Kathaleen	Lowenberg	Today's Family
Laura	Ludwin	Unicef Canada
Daylene	Lumis	Family of Children Montessori School
Sandy	Lusk	North Hamilton Community Health Centre
Peter	MacDonald	Social & Public Health Services
Melissa	MacNeil	Family Connections Counselling
Donna	MacQuarrie	Hamilton Health Sciences Corp.
Mel	Madamba-Wakeham	Hamilton YWCA Cultural Interpreting Services
Alexandra	Madjercic	Social and Public Health Services
Megan	Magill	Hamilton Community Foundation Youth Advisory Community
Gary	Makins	City of Hamilton
Dyan	Mallory	Childrens Corner Family Resource Centre - Salvation Army - Gracehaven
Cindy	Manson	Planned Parenthood Society of Hamilton
Rebecca	Maraccio	Brighter Futures Family Centre
Donna	Marcaccio	Rygiel Homes
Paul	Mark	United Way of Burlington Hamilton-Wentworth
Linda	Marshall	Mohawk ECE Lab School
Joelle	Martin	Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
Christina	Martin	YMCA
Cathy	Masterson	Hamilton Children's Museum
Grace	Mater	Social and Public Health Services
Gail	Matthews	CAPC
Glenda	McArthur	Social and Public Health Services
Sandy	McCallum	City of Hamilton
Carolyn	McCann	Hamilton Children's Museum (Vol)
Trish	McComb	Social and Public Health Services
Peter	McDonald	
Joan	McDonald	Social and Public Health Services
Jeremy	McDougall_Jobin	Hamilton Community Foundation Youth Advisory Community
Heather	McGavin	Chedoke Child and Family Centre, Hamilton Health Services
Donna	McGreal	Junior League of Hamilton Burlington
Brad	McIntosh	Community Family Treatment Service Chedoke Child and Family Centre
Meghan	McIntosh	
Michelle	McMahon	Children's Corner Family Resource Centre and Drop In
Ted	McMeekin	MPP
Michele	McNabb	Hamilton-Wentworth Council of Home and School Associations

Catherine	McPherson-Doe	Alternatives for Youth
Susan	McQuain	YSAN NCB Recreation Program
Bill	Medeiros	
Peter	Mercanti	Carmen's Banquet Centre
Marnie	Mercanti	St. Bernadette Children's Centre
Grahame	Meredith	Meredith Associates
Nick	Merolla	Children's Aid Society of Hamilton-Wentworth
Erin	Merry	Hamilton-Wentworth School Board
Gary	Michaluk	Ministry of Community and Social Services
Gordana	Mihajloric	Mohawk ECE Lab School
Nadine	Miles	Urban Core
Alison	Miller	CAPC
Jennifer	Miller	McMaster University
Brenda	Mills	Community Family Treatment Service Chedoke Child and Family Centre
Carolyn	Milne	Hamilton Community Foundation
Karen	Mitchell	We Watch Private Daycare
Michael	Moore	Dofasco Inc.
George	Morasse	Today's Family
Cathie	Moreau	Today's Family
Sherry	Morehouse	St. Matthews House
Vanice	Morgan	YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington
Violet	Mulholland	Hamilton & District Council of Co-operative Preschool
Jane	Mulkewich	Hamilton Police Service
Diane	Murphy	St. Martins Manor Catholic Family Services
Laura	Murray	STAR of Hamilton-Wentworth
Dr. J.	Mustard	The Founders Network
Lindsay	Myers	Public Health - Healthy Babies/Healthy Children
Deborah	Myers	Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
Eduardo	Navarro	
Marsha	Newby	Cornerstone Youth Services - HHSC
Laura	Newkirk	Hamilton Home & School Council
Tracy	Newton	Big Sister Youth Services
Fiona	Newton-Brown	Social and Public Health Services
Barbara	Nicholls	Brighter Futures
Amanda	Nissley	
Maryanne	Noakes	Big Brothers Association of Burlingon Hamilton Wentworth
Bernadette	Noon	Today's Family
Susanne	O'Grady	Hamilton East Community Services
Dr. Dan	Offord	Director, Canadian Centre for Studies of Children at Risk
Arleen	Outlaw	Hamilton Wentworth District School Board - Children's Hospital
Barbara	Overby	Social and Public Health Services
Rossana	Pabayo	Today's Family
Lisa	Paladino	Today's Family
Cate	Parker	Children's Secretariat
Julia	Parker	St. Lawrence School - Kindergarten
Angela	Parle	HWDHC
Judi	Partridge	The Hamilton Spectator
Carolyn	Passarelli	Social and Public Health - Dental Dept.
Andrea	Pasztor	Hamilton Community Foundation Youth Advisory Community
Karen	Pavao	CAPC
Margaret	Penca	United Way of Burlington Hamilton-Wentworth
Lorranie	Petranato	YMCA of Oakville

Ellen	Pezzetta	Social and Public Health Services Div.
Mai	Pham	Parents Helping Parents
Cynthia	Piccoli	St. Joachin Children Ctr. Of Ancaster
Rose	Pocsai	Social and Public Health Services
Lea	Pollard	CONTACT Hamilton
Lisa	Potter	Student - McMaster University
Jennifer	Powell-Fralick	Umbrella Family & Child Centres
Joe-anne	Priel	Social & Public Health Services, Hamilton
Michelyn	Putignano	Delta Secondary School
Sally	Quider	Social Planning & Research Council
Monica	Quinlan	United Way of Burlington Hamilton-Wentworth
Nancy	Quinn	Today's Family
Julie	Randell	
Rebecca	Raven	Hamilton Public Library
Kathy	Reed	Good Shepherd - Womens Centre
Chuck	Reid	Hamilton Wentworth District School Board
Judy	Reid	School to Work Programs- BEC
Margaret	Reilly	City of Hamilton
Heather	Rex	Westmount Secondary School - Student Services
Paul	Ricketts	Community Family Treatment Service Chedoke Child and Family Centre
Daniella	Ridge	Brighter Futures Family Centre
Ted	Ridley	McMaster University
Theresa	Rinaldi	YMCA of Oakville
Mark	Rizzo	Merrill-Lynch
Donna	Roadhouse	Victoria Order of Nurses - Hamilton Wentworth
Lynn	Roberts	Early Years - Region of Halton
Janyce	Robinson	United Way of Burlington Hamilton-Wentworth
Lorraine	Robinson	YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington
Janice	Rocchi	St. Jerome's
Ruth	Rodgers	Hamilton and District Council of Co-operative PreSchools
Marymarga	Rooke	Learning Disabilities Assoc. Hamilton Wentworth
Penny	Ross	YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington
Peter	Rosser	Catholic Youth Organization
Jill	Rumble	YWCA
Craig	Rushton	North Hamilton Community Health Centre
Lesley	Russell	Community Information Service
Stephanie	Rutherford	Social Planning & Research Council
Dr. Leila	Ryan	Hamilton Community Foundation
Valerie	Sadler	Hamilton Literacy Council
Tammy	Saunders	Social Planning & Research Council
Simone	Saunders	Family Literacy Network
Shelly	Savelli	Social and Public Health Services
Daphne	Scarfe	Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic Child Care Ct.
Jolene	Schmidt	Good Shepherd - Womens Centre
Karen	Schmidt	School to Work Programs- BEC
Nick	Scime	City of Hamilton
Patricia	Scott	Brighter Futures Family Centre
Pat	Senft	Hamilton Association for Commnity Lving
Joanne	Serkeyn	Hamilton Wentworth Regional Police
Sandy	Shaw	SPRC
Gerry	Siebert	Social & Public Health Services
Christine	Simpson	Health Canada - Product Safety

Angela	Sirrs	Hamilton Wentworth District School Board
Kathy	Smith	City of Hamilton
Cheryl	Soderlund	Hamilton Community Foundation
Jane	Soldera	New City of Hamilton
Loretta	Sousa	St. Patrick School
Liz	Soyka	ASCY
Linda	Spearns	Social and Public Health Services - Parent-child Division
Wanda	St. Francois	Affiliated Services for Children and Youth
Jennifer	Stairs-Robinson	Industry Education Council of Hamilton-Wentworth
Ann	Staniani	Social and Public Health Services
Jennifer	Stargratt	
Lisa	Steedman	Catholic Family Services
Cheryl	Steep	Social and Public Health Services
Sue	Stephen	Ministry of Community and Social Services
Tom	Stewart	YMCA
Corina	Stroop	CAPC
Virginia	Swartz	Carmen's Banquet Centre
Ray	Swinarchin	Today's Family
Elizabeth	Szkodziak	
Susan	Szozda	Social and Public Health Services
Brenda	Tedesco	Community Family Treatment Service Chedoke Child and Family Centre
Kamille	TenBrinke	CONTACT Hamilton
Michelle	Terepora	
Susan	Tesluk	
Ann	Thivierge	Wraparound Hamilton c/o Lynwood Hall Child & Family Centre
Ida	Thomas	YMCA
Alex	Thomson	Lynwood Hall Child & Family Centre
Sharon	Thorne	Social and Public Health Services
Mary Alice	Tofflemire	Girl Guides of Canada
Lori	Tomalty-Nusca	Infant Parent Program HHSC
Laura	Troccoli-Ormond	City of Hamilton
Christina	Tsitsos	Umbrella Family & Child Centres
Larry	Tuff	Chedoke Child and Family Ctr
Deb	Uhrig	Childrens Corner Family Resource Centre - Salvation Army - Gracehaven
Jane	Underwood	Social & Public Health Services
Joan	Urquhart	
Maria	Vaiciunas	PHP
Barb	Vanary	Today's Family
Rosy	VanBerkel	Social and Public Health Services
Danielle	Vanden Akker	Mission Services of Hamilton- True North Child and Youth
Tony	Vareri	MP - Stoney Creek
Karla	Velasco	Hamilton Community Foundation
Wendy	Veldman	Hamilton Health Science Corp.
Stefania	Veltri	YMCA
Anne	Vickers	Community Adolescent Network of Hamilton
Brenda	Volkov	YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington
Mary Pat	Vollick	Pumpkin Patch Day Care
Marianne	Vrbanic	City of Hamilton
Tammy	Wade	Hamilton Regional Indian Centre
Tracey	Waldron	CAPC
Eileen	Walker	John Howard Society
Brenda	Wallage	Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha School

Chris	Warner	Stoney Creek YMCA
Dianne	Weatherston	Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
Janis	Webster	Umbrella Family & Child Centres
Tammy	Weemhoff	CAPC
Carol Leigh	Wehking	
Theresa	Weylie	Today's Family
Kirk	Whalen	
Ron	Wheeler	Hamilton Police Services
Susan	Wier	Hamilton YWCA
Carol	Wilkinson	Hamilton Public Library
Clara	Will	Adventure Place
Lindsay	Williams	Hamilton Community Foundation
Duane	Williams	SPRC - Staff
Laura	Williams	Dedwadadehsnye's Aboriginal Health Centre
Tara	Williams	Dedwadadehsnye's Aboriginal Health Centre
Cathie	Williams-Downey	Today's Family
Maureen	Wilsack	Social and Public Health Services, Parent & Child Branch
Gary	Winship	CONTACT Hamilton
Dale	Wood	District Manager Community Ser. Dept. City of Hamilton
Karen	Woolner	Social and Public Health Services
Lorie	Woolsey	Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic Child Care Ct.
Sharon	Worchalak	CONTACT Hamilton
Carol	Wylie	Today's Family
Joyce	Zembal	Affiliated Services for Children and Youth (ASY)
Lori	Zess	Today's Family
Nadia	Zietsma	
Vi	Zolis	
Tanya	Zrakic	Today's Family